

12 OF 17 CLEARED

FBI's Taps Got Little

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY
Star-News Staff Writer

Twelve of the 17 U.S. officials and newspapermen whose phones were tapped by the FBI between 1969 and 1971 were completely innocent of involvement in national security leaks, former FBI official William C. Sullivan said yesterday.

It was to safeguard the identity of the innocent parties, the onetime assistant to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover said, that he removed the wiretap logs and authorizations from his office and gave them to Assistant Atty. Gen. Robert Mardian.

Sullivan, for many years head of the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division, would not disclose the identities of any who were subjected to electronic surveillance. It is known that four were newsmen and that the list of officials tapped was furnished by the office of national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger.

Sullivan said he became worried about the security of the wiretap file when he had a falling-out with Hoover late in 1971. Believing his FBI days were numbered, he said, he went to Mardian and told him the wiretap documents were in his office, not in regular files.

"HOOVER had told me to keep them in my office," Sullivan said. "He never told me why. I told Mardian that the documents on the taps, requested by the White House and authorized by the Justice Department, were in my office and asked what I should do with them."

"Mardian said he didn't have authority to tell me what to do but would ask other people. Later, he came to me and said he had taken it up with

and that the Attorney General (John N. Mitchell) had authorized me to give them to Mardian rather than have them floating around in my file cabinet."

Sullivan said he never knew what Mardian did with the documents until they became pertinent to the trial of Daniel Ellsberg and he called Mardian in Arizona to ask where they were. That call came about when Asst. Atty. Gen. Henry Petersen contacted Sullivan last month about the documents were. Mardian told him, Sullivan said, that the documents had been turned over to White House aide John D. Ehrlichman because he (Mardian) "couldn't imagine a safer place for them."

Sullivan said his instructions from Mardian when he handed over the documents last fall were to refer any questions from any source to the attorney general. But there were no inquiries until the climax of the Ellsberg trial and it was in Ehrlichman's safe that the FBI found and recovered the documents.

"BEFORE I left the FBI," Sullivan said, "I told Mark Felt (his successor as No. 3 man at the FBI) that the documents were in Mardian's possession. As far as I was concerned, they were not lost, misplaced or misused. I got rid of them so they could not be used for improper purposes."

Sullivan also said that he and Hoover conferred several times between July 23 and July 28, 1970 when they received the plan approved by President Nixon for expanded intelligence operations. This plan included resumption of previous accepted counter-intelli-

wiretaps, surveillance, and surreptitious entry, mail covers, and even techniques for mass arrest in major disorders.

Resumption of the intelligence activities was in a list of options approved by an interagency committee consisting of the FBI, CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency with Hoover as chairman. Sullivan said, "When the working paper came to the FBI, Hoover called me in two or three times and asked me what I thought, what are the dangers in each option? We approved some of the recommendations but we agreed that others held dangers. It was a matter of expediency, not principle.

"HOOVER was concerned about his image and his place in history. And he would never undertake an intelligence operation without the protection of proper and legal authorization. There was nothing new or original in the proposals. They were all things we had been doing for years until Hoover suspended many of our intelligence operations in 1966.

"The upshot of it was that we favored some of the options but opposed others. I can't say what went on in his mind but he

rejected the whole plan because there were parts of it we agreed should not be approved. That finished it."

Sullivan said that if the FBI had been doing what it should have been doing in the 1966-71 period, "this ad hoc committee (the White House "plumbers") would never have come into existence.

Sullivan, 61, now coordinator for narcotics intelligence at the Justice Department, said the plumberrs went far beyond what anyone intended them to do. He said he has never met E. Howard Hunt, knew G. Gordon Liddy only slightly and found Egil Krogh, boss of the plumberrs, uncommunicative.

He emphatically denied that he ever said that Hoover was of "unsound mind," as an interviewer recently quoted him.

"I DISAGREED with Hoover in some of his decisions," Sullivan said. "But I never questioned the soundness of his mind. Right up to the last day I saw him he was sharp and vital, old but not senile. It was his reasoning and his judgment I disagreed with and I broke with him deliberately because the situation at the FBI in 1971 had become terrible."

"Our disputes were on professional judgments," Sullivan said.

He indicated his major disagreement with Hoover was on the suspension of FBI surveillance of foreign intelligence agents. Other sources have said that Sullivan, a career counter-intelligence man, favored continued concentration on foreign espionage agents at a time when Hoover was breaking liaison with other government agencies and suspending FBI undercover operations in 1966.